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DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-195319

DATE: January 24, 1980

MATTER OF: Glenda White - [Claim for additional per diem
based on commercial lodging rates]

DIGEST: Employee, who used her camper at temporary duty site and paid \$7 daily campground fee, claims per diem based on \$19 rate for commercial lodgings on theory that she could have used commercial lodgings. Under lodgings-plus system, employee is entitled only to per diem based on average amount she actually paid for lodgings, not on basis of what she might have paid for other accommodations. See Doyt Y. Bolling, B-195638, September 14, 1979.

This decision is in response to a request from Claude F. Pickelsimer, Director, Financial Management Office, Center for DLG 03693 Disease Control, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (HEW), concerning the claim of Ms. Glenda White, an HEW employee, for additional per diem while she performed temporary duty. The issue presented for decision is whether Ms. White may be reimbursed a per diem allowance based on commercial lodgings rates which exceed her actual lodgings expenses.

Ms. White was ordered to perform temporary duty in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and was authorized to travel by privately owned vehicle at her convenience, with reimbursement not to exceed the cost of travel by common carrier. While Ms. White was in Chapel Hill, she occupied a camper and incurred lodgings expenses in the amount of \$7 per day for campground space. Ms. White has been reimbursed for 2-3/4 days of per diem at a rate of \$23 per day (\$7 lodgings plus \$16 for meals and miscellaneous expenses), but she claims reimbursement for per diem at a rate of \$35 per day on the theory that if she had traveled by common carrier she would have stayed in commercial lodgings costing at least \$19 per day.

Ms. White was authorized reimbursement for per diem at a rate of \$35 on a lodgings-plus basis. Under the lodgings-plus system, the traveler's per diem is computed on the basis of the average amount the traveler pays for lodgings, rounded to the next whole dollar, plus an allowance of \$16 for meals and miscellaneous expenses, not to exceed the maximum per diem rate of

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\$35 for travel within the conterminous United States. See Federal Travel Regulations, paras. 1-7.3c(1) and 1-7.2.

While it might be true that Ms. White could have been reimbursed for higher lodgings costs if she had traveled by common carrier and stayed in commercial lodgings, she is entitled to reimbursement only for those lodgings costs actually incurred. See Doyt Y. Bolling, B-195638, September 14, 1979.

Accordingly, Ms. White's claim for additional per diem based on commercial lodgings rates may not be paid.



For The Comptroller General
of the United States